AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for ~~achieving~~ enhancing ~~an ethylene-like~~ fruit ripening ~~effect on a plant or plant part selected from a whole plant, a fruit, a flower, a seed, a leaf, a root or a stem, the method~~ comprising the step of treating ~~the plant or plant part~~ a fruit or fruit-bearing plant with a composition comprising an N-acylethanolamine (NAE) defined by the following formula ~~in an amount sufficient to achieve the ethylene-like effect on the plant or plant part~~: $RCONHCH_2CH_2OH$, wherein R is hydrogen, or a straight, branched, cyclic or polycyclic, saturated or unsaturated C_1-C_{22} alkyl group, the composition applied to the fruit or plant in sufficient amount to cause enhanced ripening of the fruit.

2-5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the fruit or fruit-bearing plant ~~part~~ is treated with the composition before ~~it~~ the fruit is harvested ~~from a growing plant~~.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the fruit ~~plant part~~ is treated with the composition after ~~it~~ the fruit is harvested ~~from a growing plant~~.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein treating the fruit or fruit-bearing plant ~~or plant part~~ with the composition is accomplished through a method selected from spraying the fruit or fruit-bearing plant ~~or plant part~~ with the composition, dipping the fruit or fruit-bearing plant ~~or plant part~~ into the composition, or vacuum infiltrating the composition into the fruit ~~plant or plant part~~.

9. (canceled)

10. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the NAE is selected from NAE-1, NAE-2, NAE-4:0, NAE-6:0, NAE-8:0, NAE-10:0, NAE-18:1(Δ9).

11. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the NAE concentration in the composition is from about 1 mg/l to about 2,000 mg/l.

12. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the NAE concentration in the composition is from about 10 mg/l to about 1,000 mg/l.

13. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the NAE concentration in the composition is from about 20 mg/l to about 500 mg/l.

14-26. (canceled)